SUBJECT

Fourth Balkan Conference to be held at Salonika, Greece, in 1933.

DATE

3/20/33--

CASE NUMBER

770 SALONIKA, 1933

JACKET NO. 1

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1—1235 U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1933

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 1038. Bucharest, March 20, 1933.

Subject: Meeting of the Council of the Inter-Balkan Conference in Bucharest. Agenda Drawn up for Fourth Balkan Conference to be Held at Salonika.

A-1C

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
APR 1 1933
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
M

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In U. S. A. ✓

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770 SALONIKA, 1933/1

AM REED

DEPT OF STATE
APR 7 1933
DIV COM & REC

APR 15 1933

770 Salonika, 1933
770 note
770 Bucharest, 1933

The Honorable,

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
APR 3 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the Council of the Inter-Balkan Conference met in Bucharest on March 17 and 18 and drew up the agenda for the fourth Balkan Conference which will be held at Salonika.

As usual, the principal difficulties of the meeting arose because of differences of opinion between the Yugoslav and Bulgarian delegations concerning the question of minorities. A

provisional

APR 20 1933

FILED

provisional understanding was finally reached which allows the minorities question to be included in the agenda and it will be discussed at the conference in Salonika. The fourth conference is thus saved, as it is almost certain that Bulgaria would have refused to participate if the minorities question had not been admitted to discussion.

The following agenda has been approved by the Council for the fourth Balkan Conference:

Organization and Juridical Committee:

1. Modification of the statutes of the Conference.

2. A model statute for the national groups.

Political Rapprochement Committee:

1. Application of the resolutions of the preceding conference and those concerning minorities.

2. Unification of the consular conventions.

Intellectual Rapprochement Committee:

1. The teaching of the Balkan languages in each of the participating states at the conference.

2. Pedagogic week consecrated to the Balkan States.

3. Creation of a sub-committee for the cooperation of physical education and athletic organizations.

Economic Committee:

1. Draft project of a convention for economic cooperation of the Balkan States.

2. Statutes of the maritime session of the

Inter-Balkan

Inter-Balkan Chambers of Commerce.

3. Agricultural questions: a) The problem of Balkan agricultural credit; b) Balkan agriculture and international commerce; c) Chambers of agriculture; d) Draft of a statute for a Balkan cooperation bureau.

Communication Committee:

1. Development and improvement of Balkan aeronautic services.

2. The drafting of a program for large inter-Balkan highways of communication in connection with the large international systems.

3. The revision and the coordination of the decisions of the three conferences with regard to maritime, aerial and tourism communications.

4. The execution of the resolutions taken at the preceding conferences with regard to tourism.

Social and Hygiene Committee:

1. The statute of the Balkan Bureau of Labor.

2. Sanitary and veterinary conventions.

3. The protection of female workers.

4. Country hygiene. (The organization of rural hygiene expositions).

The more serious Rumanian newspapers have commented favorable upon the work of the Council and appear to be more hopeful for the realization of a Balkan union than heretofore. The DIMINEAŢA encourages the continuation of the work of rapprochement among the Balkan States in the hope of creating an organization similar to the Little

Entente

Entente as recently strengthened and fortified by its new statute. The DIMINEAŢA adds that Briand's great plan for a European federation comes closer to realization with the formation of regional pacts. That section of the Rumanian press which has taken the Balkan conferences lightly and has even been hostile towards them is taken to task and counseled to encourage and foster any movement which may result in better understanding among the states of Southern Europe.

Although a slightly more encouraging tone is evident, the Legation's opinion that the tangible results of the Balkan conferences will be unimportant, remains unchanged.

Respectfully yours,

Charles S. Wilson

Charles S. Wilson.

X

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cr. 710

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Three copies to E.I.C. Paris.

JCH/LHH

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 867.9111/395 FOR Report #-

FROM Istanbul (Allen) DATED April 5, 1933
TO NAME

REGARDING:

Meeting at Bucharest of the Council of the Balkan Conference.

Progress made at the -.

770. SALONIKA, 1933/2

Balkan Affairs.

The recent meeting at Bucarest of the Council of the Balkan Conference is reported to have made some progress in that it was decided, after the Bulgarians had threatened to have nothing more to do with the conferences, that the question of minorities would be dealt with at the next conference. The fact that the Turkish and Greek delegations proceeded to Sofia after the Council had terminated its labors and entered into contact with the Bulgarian leaders is supposed to have had for its purpose the mollifying of the Bulgars to the end of inducing them to take a less intrasigent attitude. It is said to have been agreed to hold a Balkan touristic congress at Sofia in June. There is not enough information in the papers to permit of forming a worth-while opinion as to what is going on but one gathers that the Bulgarians, and to a lesser extent the Albanians, both possibly influenced by Italy, are holding out for concessions on the subject of minorities which are not likely to be granted.

The Meeting At Bucarest

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Sofia, Bulgaria, April 12, 1933.

No.636 - Confidential - for staff use only.

Subject: BULGARIA, THE BALKAN CONFERENCE, AND THE MINORITIES PROBLEM.

SA
May 18 1933

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In U.S. | ✓ |
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MAY 25 1933

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
MAY 20 1933

AM EMLO

770 Salonika, 1933
note
868.4016 - Bulgarian
860H.4016 - Bulgarian

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
MAY 3 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Sir:

I have the honor to refer to the fact that the Bulgarian National Group within the framework of the Balkan conference movement sent delegates to the recent session of the council of the conference which was held in Bucharest, and to report that although after a certain amount of opposition on the part of the Yugoslav delegates the minorities problem was inscribed on the agenda for next October's session of the conference, Bulgarian participation in that meeting is still uncertain as the Bulgarian National Group continues to insist that it cannot again send delegates to a session of the conference before direct discussions have taken place between it and the

770 SALONIKA, 1933/3

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MAY 31 1933

the other National Groups on the minorities problem.

As seen from Sofia, the Bucharest session was of interest primarily because it afforded the Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish National Groups an opportunity to inquire of the Rumanians and the Yugoslavs as to the probable effects of the new Statute of the Little Entente on the Balkan conference movement. It appears 770.0 D that the Rumanian and Yugoslav delegates gave verbal assurances that the Little Entente Pact does not in any way constitute an obstacle to inter-Balkan rapprochement and that Mr. Titulesco took occasion to explain that the Little Entente exists for purely defensive purposes and therefore cannot constitute a hindrance to Balkan Union. In the opinion of the Legation it remains to be seen whether the assurances thus given will be accepted at their face value by the Albanian, Bulgarian, Greek and Turkish National Groups.

According to the Bulgarian press another interesting fact in connection with the recent meeting at Bucharest is that the Yugoslav delegates found it necessary for some reason which was not fully explained to decline for their capital city the honor of affording hospitality to the Third Balkan Conference. It appears that the Bulgarian delegates also found it expedient to decline the honor for Sofia. These two refusals seemed to indicate Salonika as the logical seat of the forthcoming conference, and so it was decided. If both Belgrade and Sofia are still unsuitable places in which to convene a Balkan conference, it would seem indeed that the protagonists of the conference movement have not as yet made great progress towards the attainment

of

of their ideal

Following the meeting at Bucharest the Turkish and the Greek delegates visited Sofia for several days, where they established contact with most of the political and intellectual leaders of the country, and were received by the King. Direct meetings were also held between the Bulgarians and the Greek delegates and between the Bulgarians and the Turks. These meetings were for the purpose of passing in review the problems outstanding between Bulgaria and the respective states of the visiting delegates. That the meetings between the Greeks and the Bulgarians may have actually accomplished something is indicated by a joint statement issued at the termination of these meetings. This statement reads as follows in translation:

> "The Bulgarian and Greek delegates to the Council of the Balkan Union, after having exchanged views during the course of their meetings on March 21, have agreed to intervene with their respective governments for the purpose of accelerating the work of rapprochement between the Balkan peoples and with a view to the application within their respective countries of all of the resolutions of the Balkan conferences. They have also agreed to work for the prompt settlement of all Bulgaro-Greek litigious questions of a political, financial and economic character."

During his stay in Sofia the chief Greek delegate, Mr. Papanastassiou, informed the local press of his conviction that the Balkan Pact provides the means of creating that atmosphere of friendship, of confidence and of security which, as has been demonstrated in the case of Greece and Turkey, is so necessary to the solution of the minorities problem. Once Greece and Turkey had settled their age old differences, said the Greek statesman, the treatment of the minorities ceased to be a constant cause for friction between the two states.

In

In connection with Mr. Papanastassiou's remarks it may be useful to point out here that after the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor, Greece abandoned its former ideas of territorial expansion at the expense of Turkey. It was therefore possible for the Turks to adopt a new point of view with reference to the relatively small number of Greeks left within its boundaries. They were no longer the instrument of Greek policy. But Yugoslavia and Greece still see in the Bulgarian minorities a danger to their territorial integrity, and well they may. Although the Bulgarian Government is not actively prosecuting a policy of territorial expansion at this time, there is no doubt that popular opinion in Bulgaria still looks to the time when the major portion of Macedonia will be Bulgarian territory. In other words, the Greco-Turkish case is not analogous to that as between Bulgaria and Yugoslavia and Bulgaria and Greece. And it is for this reason that the Legation is of the opinion that it will be a long time before the Bulgarian National Group accepts the Balkan Pact as it now stands. Bulgarian opinion insists that until the minorities problem has been settled, Bulgaria cannot participate in even the loosest regional grouping within the Balkan peninsula. Furthermore, there is every reason to believe that the Bulgarian National Group is in reality hostile to the Balkan Pact on the theory that acceptance by it of the Pact would strengthen the case against Bulgaria for territorial revision at some later date. In view of the foregoing the Legation is of the opinion that the optimism of Dr. Babcock, recorded in the enclosure to the Department's Instruction No.103, of

December

December 27, 1932, is illusory.

It may be added that on returning to Sofia from his recent visit to Paris and London, the Bulgarian Prime Minister travelled from Lausanne on the same train with Mr. Yeftitch, the Yugoslav Minister for Foreign Affairs. According to OUTRO (No.3460, March 22, 1933) Mr. Mooshanoff and Mr. Yeftitch discussed matters of mutual interest during the trip. This journal reports that on the subject of Macedonia Mr. Mooshanoff expressed the opinion that the Bulgarian population in Yugoslavia should be given the cultural rights provided for by the Minorities Treaty. He is reported to have added that a policy of denationalization (on the part of Yugoslavia) is not a policy of rapprochement and that furthermore the Serbian state had recognized by a treaty voluntarily signed by it in 1912 the Bulgarian character of Macedonia; only the problem of the vilayet of Skopie was left for arbitration by the Russian Tzar. Mr. Yeftitch is said to have replied that a world war had intervened between the treaty of 1912 and the present, to which the Prime Minister is supposed to have countered that war cannot change the nationality of a people. Mr. Yeftitch then said, according to OUTRO, that he sincerely desired rapprochement between the two states, but that the revolutionaries make this impossible. Mr. Mooshanoff is reported to have replied that the revolutionaries would have no raison d'etre if the Yugoslav Government were to apply the provisions of the minorities treaties. Whether or not the foregoing is an accurate account of the conversation, the Legation is not in a

position

860H.4016-Bulgaria/

position to know, but it can state that the reported remarks of the Bulgarian Prime Minister faithfully reflect Bulgarian opinion.

Respectfully yours,

Henry W. Shoemaker,
Henry W. Shoemaker.

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LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Sofia, Bulgaria, July 28, 1933.

No.699

SUBJECT: COMMUNICATIONS CONFERENCE OF BALKAN STATES

DIVISION OF EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS
JUL 2 1 1933
COPY IN EE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

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JUL 29 1933

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
JUL 29 1933

FOR DISTRIBUTION - CHECK Yes No
To the Field
In U. S. A.

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that from June 15 to June 17, inclusive, there was held in Sofia, in conformity with a decision taken at the Third Balkan Conference last autumn, a conference of delegates from the Balkan states on communications, tourist traffic and aeronautics. All the states of the peninsula sent special representatives except Albania, which was represented by the Secretary of its Legation at Sofia.

Adhering to the tactics of Bulgarian delegates to former Balkan conferences of using the Balkan Conference movement as a sounding board for Bulgaria's protest against

770 SALONIKA, 1933/4

AUG 2 - 1933

against the peace settlement, the Bulgarian members of the subcommittee on aeronautics raised the question of the disabilities placed on Bulgarian aviation by the Treaty of Neuilly, maintaining that the guiding principle of the Balkan Conference should be equality of rights. The other members of the subcommittee, and especially the Yugoslavs, took the position that the limitation of armament by the Treaty of Neuilly was not a matter for discussion by a conference on communications, with the result that the Bulgarian members withdrew, thereby terminating the deliberations of this subcommittee. The subcommittees on communications and on tourist traffic, however, proceeded to discuss their respective problems and ultimately adopted resolutions which appear well on paper but which will doubtless prove difficult, if not impossible, of realization in view of national animosities and of depleted state treasuries.

One of the major features of the resolution of the subcommittee on communications is a declaration in favor of the construction of two autostrades which would connect the Balkan capitals with the major motor routes of Central and Western Europe. One of the proposed superhighways would start at Posthumia (Italian border post) and proceed to Belgrade, Tzaribrod, Sofia and Istanbul. The other would be from Oradia to Alba Julia, Bucharest, Ruschuk, Sofia, Salonika and Athens. A third route of lesser importance and therefore not glorified by the term autostrade would be from Igoumenitza on the Albanian coast to Yanina, Metsovo and Salonika. It is also stated in the resolution of this subcommittee that the Danube

between

between Bulgaria and Rumania should be bridged and that a railway line should be built from Doupnitza, in Bulgaria, to Demirhissar, in Greece. The construction of this line and of the Danube bridge would establish direct communications between Bucharest, Sofia and Salonika, and would connect Poland and the Baltic states with the Aegean. It is also urged in the resolution of the sub-committee on communications that the railway from Sofia to the Bulgarian border station of Guechevo be extended to Koumanovo in Southern Serbia and that ultimately this line be continued to connect Tirana by railway with the rest of the peninsula. The resolution of the subcommittee on communications is also of interest because it contains a declaration in favor of a veterinary convention which would facilitate the transit shipment of live stock and animal products.

In conclusion it may be observed that the proposals for better inter-Balkan communication reveal most emphatically the important geographical position of the Bulgarian capital.

Respectfully yours,

Henry W. Shoemaker,

Henry W. Shoemaker.

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MBB:MC

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Sofia, Bulgaria, August 29, 1933.

No.732

SUBJECT: BALKAN CONFERENCE

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
SEP 23 1933
MR BULLITT

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SEP 26 1933

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SEP 23 1933
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SEP 21 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

AM RECD
SEP 2 1933
770 SALONIKA, 1933/5
FILED
SEP 27 1933

The Honorable
The Secretary of State,
Washington.

Sir:

770 Salonika 1933

I have the honor to refer to the Legation's despatch No.636, of April 18, 1933, reporting that Bulgarian participation in the October meeting of the Balkan Conference is contingent upon bilateral meetings of the Bulgarian National Group with the National Group of Yugoslavia, Rumania, Greece and Turkey on the minorities issue, and to inform the Department that the Bulgarian National Group, as such meetings have not yet been held, has now asked that the date for this year's Balkan Conference be postponed from October 15 until some time in November, so as to allow time for these promised

promised bilateral meetings. It is also understood that the Bulgarian National Group is preparing a counter-project to the Balkan pact which has already been elaborated by the conference movement, and that in consequence additional time is desired before the meeting of this year's conference.

Respectfully yours,

Maynard B. Barnes,
Charge d'Affaires ad interim.

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LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Sofia, Bulgaria, September 16, 1933.

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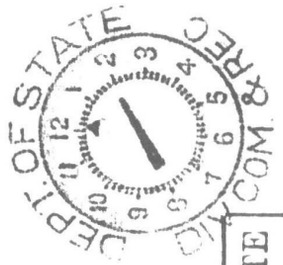
No.746

SUBJECT: BALKAN CONFERENCE



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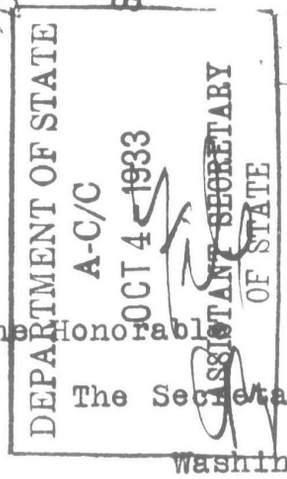
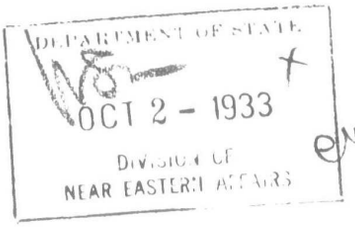
10/5-/33



The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.



Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that the local press has announced that Mr. Mooshanoff and Mr. Malinoff have received letters from Mr. Vozikis, President of the Greek Chamber of Deputies, inviting the Bulgarian Government and the Bulgarian Parliament, in the name of the Greek Chamber, to accord active support to the work of the Balkan Conference and to the application of the conference's proposals designed to dispel misunderstanding between the Balkan peoples. It is understood that similar letters have been addressed to the prime ministers and presiding officers of parliamentary bodies of the other Balkan states. As yet there has been no discussion

PM RECD

770 SALONIKA, 1933/6

FILED
OCT 11 1933

discussion in the Bulgarian press of this call for official support of the conference movement. In this connection it may be recorded, with reference to the Legation's despatch No.732, of August 29, 1933, that it has been agreed to postpone this year's conference to the end of October. 770 Salonika 1933/5

It may also be reported that the local press has announced that arrangements are now under way to hold a meeting on the minorities issue between the Bulgarian and Rumanian national groups toward the end of this month.

Respectfully yours,

Maynard B. Barnes,
Chargé d'Affaires, ad interim.

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MBB:MC

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770.SALONIKA, 1933/7

SEE 770.00/267 FOR #883

FROM Albania (Huston) DATED Oct.5, 1933
TO NAME

1—1127

REGARDING:

Salonika Conference.

Conversation with Mehmed Konitza, Albanian delegate to the conference, WHO STATES THAT that November 5th has been set for the opening date, but that Yugoslavia wishes a postponement.

W1

No. 883. Tirana, October 5, 1933.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Albanian Views on Balkan Accords.

770 Salonika 1933

770.00/267

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Djafer Villa, expressed to me yesterday his gratification at the progress now apparently being made toward a closer understanding among the Balkan states. "I am happy", he said, "to note the conclusion of an accord between Greece and Turkey. The meetings of the Yugoslav and Bulgarian sovereigns and the visit of the Turkish Premier and Foreign Minister to Sofia are also encouraging. As between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, however, I feel that the time is not yet ripe. I happen to know the Yugoslav situation well

and

and believe that the question of internal administration and harmony must be solved before any definite rapprochement can be realized. The inclusion of Bulgaria in a federated Yugoslav state, advocated by many, may even some time be achieved, but certainly that can not come before important internal problems, such as that of Croatia and Slovenia, have been solved. Naturally Italy looks upon all these movements toward closer Balkan ties as a distinct menace to her ambitions in this direction". He then added that he was, of course, discussing this question academically and in confidence rather than in his capacity as Foreign Minister.

Mr. Mehmed Konitza, Albanian delegate to the Balkan Conferences, stated that November 5th is the date now set for the Salonika conference. "But now I understand", he added, "that Yugoslavia wishes to postpone the meeting to a later date, probably in order to weigh the results of the Little Entente conference at Sinaia. Undoubtedly the atmosphere is at present clearer than it has been at the time of the other Balkan conferences, but the problem of agreement between Yugoslavia and Bulgaria remains difficult. As soon as they evidence any friendliness of any kind, the Comitadji throw a few bombs to split them apart again."

Respectfully yours,

Cloyce K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

CKH/ejs
710

A true copy of the signed original.

PM RECD

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 911. Tirana, November 3, 1933.

Confidential.

NOV 15 33

SUBJECT: Albanian Delegation to the Fourth Balkan Conference.

THE UNDER SECRETARY
NOV 21 1933
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of Economic Adviser
NOV 20 1933

SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE SECRETARY
NOV 22 1933
MR BULLITT

770. SALONIKA, 1933/8

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 15 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to quote below an article appearing in yesterday's issue of the VATRA (Tirana) regarding the Albanian delegation to the Fourth Balkan Conference which is scheduled to open at Salonika November 5th:

NOV 29 1933
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"On the 5th instant there will meet in Salonika the Fourth Balkan Conference to discuss matters of importance concerning the six Balkan countries, particularly the significant political movements in the Balkans at the present time.

"Albania will participate in this Conference, as always, by sending there a delegation consisting of members of the Albanian Balkan Group and two others who represent our commercial interests in the Inter-Balkan Chamber of Commerce at Istanbul.

"An

"An unexpected illness prevented the departure of Mr. Mehmet Konitza, President of the Albanian delegation, to the Conference. The illness is light and it is highly probable that he may leave by air so as to reach the Albanian delegation in Salonika before the beginning of the Conference on the 5th.

"Mr. Leonida Nachi, General Secretary of the Albanian Group, left alone today at 2.30. If the President is unable to be present, Mr. Nachi will act as President as well as Secretary.

"We are informed that the list of Albanian delegates also includes Mr. Fazlli Frasheri, Lawyer Lisimah Kondi, Mr. Perikli Andjopoulos and Mr. Theodore Titopoulos, the last two being Albanian members of the "Chambre de Commerce Interbalkanique" at Istanbul who are sojourning in Salonika."

The foregoing article is substantially correct, although Mr. Konitza's illness is somewhat more serious than indicated and it appears highly unlikely that he will be able to proceed to the Conference during the next week or more.

Mr. Nachi, the Secretary of the Albanian National Group at the Conference, made the following remarks in a conversation prior to his departure: "The Conference this time is very important and it is absolutely essential that Albania be there. Both the King and ourselves are anxious that a delegation should be on hand to offset any impression that Albania is displeased at the ommission of any mention of Albania at the recent meetings of Balkan monarchs and statesmen." Mr. Nachi also informed a representative of this Legation that the Albanian Chargé d'Affaires at Athens would be the Albanian Government's observer at the Conference.

Albania not only has felt "left out" of the recent Balkan parade of diplomatists, but naturally considers that her present process of cutting ties with Italy logically dictates a closer collaboration with the other Balkan states.

Respectfully yours,

Cloyce K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

CKH/sjs
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LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 917. Tirana, November 8, 1933.

Confidential.

SUBJECT: Albania and the Fourth Balkan Conference.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEC 4 - 1933
WESTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS

PM RECD
NOV 22 33

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DEC 5 - 1933
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEC 6 - 1933

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
NOV 23 1933
DIVISION OF NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

770. SALONIKA, 1933/9

FILED
DEC 8 1933

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to enclose herewith a translation of the address of Mr. Mehmed Konitza, President of the Albanian Delegation to the Fourth Balkan Conference, which was read at the opening of the Conference on November 5th by the Secretary of the Albanian delegation, Mr. Leonida Nachi. As mentioned in a previous despatch, Mr. Konitza's illness has prevented his attending the Conference.

The two outstanding features of Mr. Konitza's address are (a) his deprecation of the recent movement in the Balkans toward regional pacts and accords, with special reference to the Greco-Turk accord, and (b) his intimation

intimation that the Albanian Government stands prepared to accept, in principle, the proposed Balkan pact. The first of these points undoubtedly has two roots, one in general principle and the other in Albania's feeling of isolation and loneliness when she was not included in the conversations and meetings of the past few weeks; the latter is a natural outgrowth of Albania's recent leaning away from Italy and toward the other Balkan states, the words "in principle" recalling chiefly the old problem of minorities.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Djafer Villa, told me today that no definite news had yet been received from the Conference by the Albanian Government. The Secretary General, Dr. Beratti, spoke of the improved atmosphere at the present conference and added, smilingly, "The rest of the world is accustomed to speaking of the Balkans as a powder barrel; now they will be converted into a wine barrel".

Mr. R. B. Markham, Balkan representative of the Christian Science Monitor, who had flown to Tirana directly from Salonika, said to me yesterday: "Nothing of consequence had yet happened when I left Salonika; today's the big day. But you should see the Turks and the Greeks! They are just like that" -----hooked fingers ------, "walking arm in arm and hand in hand on every point. The Bulgarians are much more amenable than ever before. They are a motley bunch of youngsters, all the old patriots having refused to go, and anything they sign won't mean much. However, they have instructions to be

good

good boys and cause no trouble; they have practically been directed to commit themselves on nothing unless absolutely necessary, but to agree to anything rather than to hold out alone or conspicuously and thus draw down further criticism and accusations."

There are also enclosed herewith translations of the usual exchange of telegrams between Mr. Papanastasiou, President of the Balkan Conference, and the Albanian Prime Minister, Pandeli Evangheli, on the occasion of the opening of the Conference.

Respectfully yours,

Cloyce K. Huston
Chargé d'Affaires, a.i.

2 Enclosures:
As stated.

JM

CKH/SJS
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Enclosure No. 1 in Despatch No. 917

Dated Nov. 8, 1933 from the American Legation, Tirana, Albania

Address of Mr. Mehmed Konitza, President of the Albanian Delegation to the Fourth Balkan Conference, read at the Opening of the Conference by Mr. Leonida Nachi, Secretary of the Albanian Delegation.

(Translation from Albanian)

"Here we are again under the skies of beautiful Hellas.

"It is my great privilege to express, in the name of the Albanian delegation, our profound gratitude to the Government of the Republic, to the people and to the Greek group, who were kind enough to offer us still another time and so generously their hospitality. As to our beloved and indefatigable President, Mr. Papanastasiou, I can assure you that to him are directed the fullest sympathies and gratitude of the Albanian people.

"It is a satisfaction for us to know that the leaders of the Balkan peoples, who were good enough to encourage and applaud our work, have recently devoted their efforts in the direction of conciliation and rapprochement among the countries whose destinies they direct. I say Balkan peoples, because our people have now become accustomed to the idea of the union.

"We honor very much this praiseworthy interest and concern but, nevertheless, it seems to me that the methods that have been employed have somewhat put askew the axis of the Balkan Conference.

"After encountering many obstacles the Conference succeeded in evolving the project of a Balkan Pact which contains the foundations of a union of our countries. Our Governments have found this dainty dish, prepared by the cooks of the Conference, to be tasty, but no one had the courage to touch it. They then decided that it would be better to try their own recipes, and when they had prepared a series of dishes they mixed them all together and served the concoction to their peoples. This concocted dish corresponds closely to a Macedonian gulash, but I have my doubts whether, being so complicated, it will agree with the stomachs of the Balkan peoples that have always been accustomed to a simple food.

"Let us consider the Greco-Turkish treaty, which created so much commotion. From the viewpoint of theory, that treaty comes from the wisdom, good-will and manly courage on the part of the Governments of the two contracting countries and shows their will to forget the so bitter past and to live in the future in peace and intimate friendship. From the practical viewpoint this pact presents nothing for the general welfare of the Balkan countries. It is a regional accord which affords no other than a relative guarantee for the contracting parties. In fact, it guarantees the inviolability of only a section of their frontiers.

"The

"The design pursued by the Conference is to form a bloc to insure all the frontiers of the Balkan countries against an eventual attack either by a member of the Balkan family or from outside. The Balkan Pact project, which provides for this guarantee in part, can be perfected by our governments. Accords of another nature have been crossed with the Greco-Turkish treaty, and still other treaties are in preparation. In time of peace those treaties may be of some value, but it is very doubtful whether they can resist the first roar of cannons.

"The bloc to which I am referring must not necessarily isolate itself in the belief that it shall be powerful, because other blocs, more powerful than this, may be formed. On the contrary, the Balkan bloc-----as an integral body and not individually-----must seek friends outside the Peninsula with whom it has common interests, always with the aim of maintaining peace in Europe.

"There is no reasoning person, no matter how optimistic, who will deny that the situation of our continent was never so turbulent and critical as at present. Elaborate orations and half-way measures cannot change this situation. The sky is heavily charged with black clouds and our govem - ments should not forget that to them belongs the sacred duty of providing defense for their peoples before the storm breaks.

"We feel convinced that the Albanian Government, in consideration of these realities and because of the desire to see the union of our peoples brought to realization as early as possible, is ready to accept in principle the project for the Balkan Pact and it will be happy to come in contact for this purpose with the other governments of the Peninsula, if the latter see the same realities and are inspired by the same desires.

Enclosure No. 2 in Despatch No. 917

(Translation from Albanian) dated Nov. 8, 1933 from the American Legation, Tirana, Albania.

From the VATRA of November 8, 1933.

Telegrams exchanged between Mr. Papanastasiou, President of the Balkan Conference, and Mr. Pandeli Evangheli, Albanian Prime Minister.

- - - -

"His Excellency

"The Prime Minister,

"Tirana.

"I have the honor to inform you that the Fourth Balkan Conference has elected Your Excellency Honorary President.

"I wish to express my congratulations and feel convinced that in the future, as in the past, your Government and yourself will not cease to promote the efforts for the development of the relations of our united peoples as a means for the improvement of our destiny.

"Salonika, November 6, 1933.

"Papanastasiou."

- -

"His Excellency Mr. Papanastasiou,

"President of the Balkan Conference,

"Salonika.

"Please accept my warmest thanks and meanwhile become the interpreter of my sentiments of gratitude to the members of the Conference for the great honor they have bestowed upon me in electing me Honorary President. On this occasion please accept my most sincere good wishes for the realization of the great and noble ideal pursued by the national groups of the Balkan peoples.

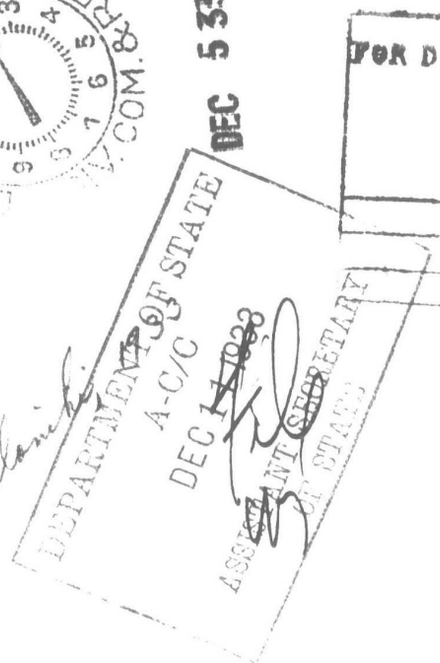
"Tirana, November 7, 1933.

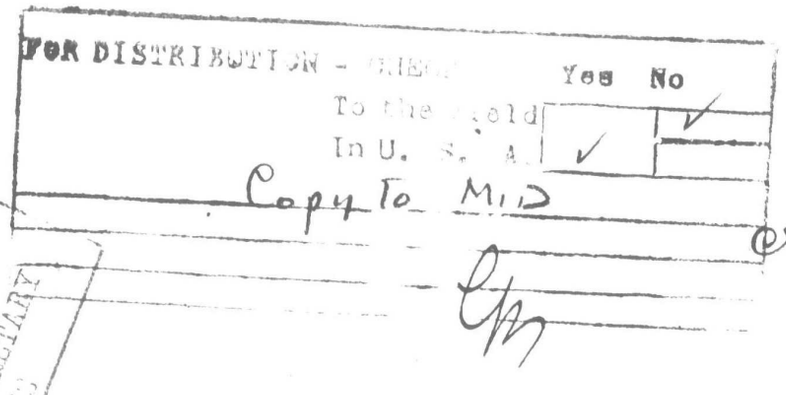
"The Prime Minister."

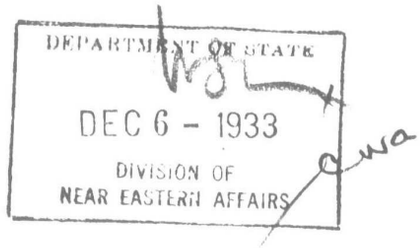
LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 40. Belgrade, November 17, 1933.

Subject: Balkan Conference at Saloniki.







770 SALONIKA, 1933/10

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that the recent Balkan Conference held at Saloniki aroused but little interest in official circles of Yugoslavia and was almost completely ignored by the press.

The President of the Yugoslav delegation upon his return from Saloniki made the following statement:

> "This conference was distinguished by the fact that political questions were not discussed to the same extent as they were previously; thus the conference was able to devote itself to a greater degree to economic questions. It should be stated that the Bulgarians declared that with two reservations they accepted the Pact of the Balkan Conference.

"However

"However, we are of the impression that matters are progressing slowly and that a Balkan consciousness is revealing itself as well as a constantly increasing comprehension of the absolute necessity of arriving at full political and economic Balkan independence."

I have the impression that the Yugoslav Government, like the Roumanian Government, as I reported at the time of the meeting of the Balkan Conference at Bucharest, does not take the work of this organization seriously nor expect any concrete results.

Respectfully yours,

Charles S. Wilson

Charles S. Wilson.

File No.500 - Triplicate.

CSW:HSB

DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

770 SALONIKA, 1933/11

SEE 867.9111/409 FOR Report #-

FROM Istanbul (Allen) DATED Nov.11, 1933

TO NAME 1—1127 O.F.O.

REGARDING:

Turkish delegation to the Balkan Conference to be held at Salonika, which ~~xx~~ is headed by Hassan Bey, for on November 2.

Wi

Balkan Conference At Saloniki

770 Saloniki, 1933

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
BUREAU OF INDEXES AND ARCHIVES

The Turkish delegation to the Fourth Balkan Conference, consisting of twentyone persons and headed by Hassan Bey, vice president of the Grand National Assembly, left for Saloniki on November 2.

- - - - - - -

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Sofia, Bulgaria, November 27, 1933.

No.785

SUBJECT: BULGARIA AND THE BALKAN CONFERENCE.

Office of Economic Advisor
DEC 22 1933
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEC 12 33

Copy to M.I.D.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
DEC 1933
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE

Assistant Secretary
of State
DEC 27 1933
MR. SAYRE

DEC 13 1933
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

770 SALONIKA, 1933/12

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

I have the honor to inform the Department that although Bulgaria sent an important delegation to the IV Balkan Conference held at Salonika between November 5th and November 11th, and despite the fact that the bilateral meetings to discuss the minorities issue, of which I wrote in my despatch No.732 of August 29, 1933, were not held, Bulgarian opinion remains skeptical of the possibility of real achievement through the conference movement, largely on the ground that cooperation in the economic field cannot be attained without progress toward conciliation in the political field, and even the

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JAN 3 - 1934

most

most ardent supporters of the conference movement in Bulgaria do not go so far as to claim accomplishment in this field. According to Bulgarian opinion it is the determination of the victorious states of the Balkan peninsula to assimilate the Bulgarian minorities that emasculates the effort embodied in the conference movement. The fact that the Bulgarian delegation to the IV Conference considered it necessary to reiterate, with reference to the resolution adopted, the reservation of last year to the effect that the Bulgarian National Group cannot accept the draft pact in the absence of adequate safeguards for the protection of minorities and until the principle of equality between the Balkan states is accepted, is pointed to by Bulgarian opinion as proof that the IV Conference has proved almost as sterile as the previous gatherings of representatives of the Balkan states.

The one patch of blue seen by Bulgarian opinion in an otherwise overcast sky is the declaration adopted unanimously at Salonica to the effect that there is urgent need for direct railway connections between Greece, Bulgaria and Rumania by the simultaneous construction of a normal gauge line between Siderocastro and Doupnitza and a bridge over the Danube between Bulgaria and Rumania. If effect can be given to this declaration in the relatively near future perhaps Bulgarian opinion will look with more favor on the conference movement. Bulgarian commercial interests are most anxious for direct outlets to the south and southwest and to the north, but political and military considerations still entangle the

path

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path to this desired freedom from Yugoslav control over a large portion of Bulgaria's exports. Nevertheless, now that a Bulgaro-Greek commission is at work on the litigious questions outstanding between Sofia and Athens, and that efforts are afoot to improve Bulgaro-Rumanian relations, much is heard of this project, and the seal of approval placed upon it by the IV Balkan Conference is pleasing to local opinion. In view of the recognized difficulties standing in the way of the construction of a bridge over the Danube between Bulgaria and Rumania prior to the completion of the Yugoslav-Rumanian bridge, and because of the problem of financing such a project at this time, there is now a plan afoot to link the Bulgarian and Rumanian railway systems by a train-ferry service between Rustschuk and Giurgiu.

Respectfully yours,

Maynard B. Barnes

Maynard B. Barnes,
Charge d'Affaires ad interim.

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MBB:MC

LEGATION OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 3. Tirana, December 2, 1933.

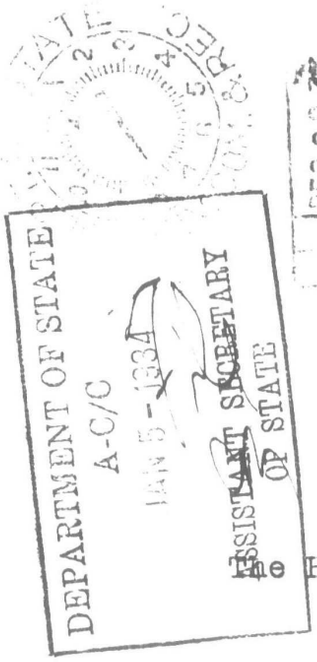
Confidential.

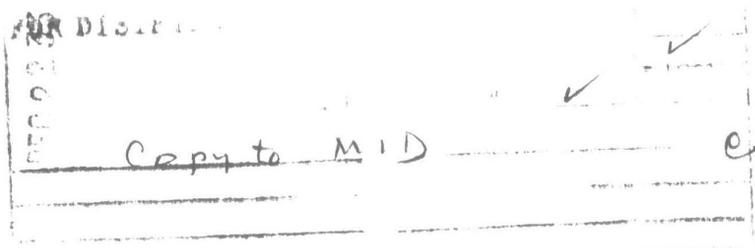
770 Salonika, 1933

SUBJECT: Albanian Delegate's Comment on the Fourth Balkan Conference at Salonika.

770 SALONIKA, 1933/13

AM FILED 770 Salonika, 1933





The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington.

Sir:

770 Salonika

I have the honor to report the comment made to a representative of the Legation by Mr. Leonida Naçi, Secretary of the Albanian Group to the Balkan Conference and head of the Delegation this year because of the illness of Mr. Mehmed Konitza, regarding the recent conference at Salonika. He was highly gratified to note an atmosphere of greater warmth than previously and the absence of many of the old irritations, remarking particularly on the energy and enthusiasm manifested by Greece in the furtherance of the Balkan Union idea.

FILED JAN 9 - 1934

"The

"The harmonious co-operation between the different delegations was remarkable", said Mr. Naçi. "No irritating questions were brought up for discussion, and it was taken for granted that the problem of the minorities, which was merely mentioned by the Bulgarians, will find a solution after the display of such a friendly atmosphere as appeared at Saloniki. The efforts of the various Balkan groups will now be directed toward causing the Balkan Foreign Ministers to meet and give an official touch to our work by taking up the discussion of the Bucarest Balkan Pact.

"Valuable progress was made with regard to the codification of laws in the Balkans. The Yugoslav group is charged with this technical work. The project of a partial customs union in the Balkans, as prepared with the assistance of the Greek Minister of Finance Mr. Kofinas, was approved. The committee on communications made important decisions with regard to tourism in the Balkans, the linking of Balkan capitals by autostradas and the creation of a Balkan navigation section in the Inter-Balkan Chamber of Commerce at Istanbul."

Mr. Naçi indicated that the Albanian delegation received every consideration at the conference and closed his remarks by saying, "My hopes for the realization of the Balkan union idea have never been so strong."

Little interest in the conference was manifested in Tirana in either official or diplomatic quarters, the essence of all comment being that there were signs of a greater cordiality at the conference but that nothing

much

much could be expected from it.

Respectfully yours,

Post Wheeler

CKH/SJS
500

2 Carbon Copies
Received

EMBASSY OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

No. 62 Istanbul, December 11, 1933.

Subject: The Fourth Balkan Conference.

Office of Economic Advisor
JAN 11 1934
DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY
OF STATE
JAN 13 1934

DISTRIBUTION
In U. S.
Copy to Legation Belgrade

Assistant Secretary
of State
JAN 12 1934
MR. SAYRE

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
JAN 2 - 1934
DIVISION OF
NEAR EASTERN AFFAIRS

Commercial Office (A-O/O)
To Belgrade
1/13/34

The Honorable

The Secretary of State,

Washington, D.C.

Sir:

The Fourth Balkan Conference was held in Salonika between November 5th and 11th, 1933, the Turkish delegation, as heretofore, being headed by Hasan Bey, deputy from Trebizond and Vice President of the Grand National Assembly. He was accompanied by twenty members, including six deputies. The present recital is derived from Turkish press sources, and represents the Turkish point of view. It is obvious that the conference is making headway in consolidating public sentiment and in paving the

way

770 SALONIKA, 1933/14 FILED
JAN 15 1934

way to official understandings,and the universal hope that good will flow out of these annual meetings is reflected by the patronage which the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace gives to them. During the year ended June 30, 1931, the Endowment contributed $10,000 to the support of the conference, and additional support has been given since, but to just what amount I do not as yet know. Owing to the Endowment's reduced revenues, I dare say that the contribution also has been reduced. The director of the Endowment, in his report for the year 1931, has said: "It would be a most interesting and striking development if the Balkans, so long the center of bitterness, suspicion, and discord should, by the adjustment of their own disagreements through mutual concessions and a friendly cooperation, point the way to permanent international peace." Unfortunately international peace does not seem to be progressing with anything like the momentum which it has acquired in this long-troubled peninsula.

As to the conference itself, it must be said that Turkish readers were unable to obtain a very precise account of the work accomplished, probably due to inadequate secretarial organization, and, in any case, critical discussion in the press has been singularly lacking. The conference was originally scheduled to meet on September 15th, but the date was postponed to November 5th at the request of the Bulgarians, in order that it might not coincide with

Ismet

Ismet Pasha's visit to Sofia. Probably the preceding interstate visits of Balkan statesmen were responsible for the remarkably mild and conciliatory atmosphere which characterized the most recent conference, as compared with the turbulent sessions witnessed at Bucharest when the Bulgarians almost completely withdrew from participation. This noticeable change in the general atmosphere is in itself considered to be a great step forward. Although the eternal question of the minorities also came up at Salonika, the debate which ensued appears to have been non-offensive.

The outstanding achievement during the Fourth Balkan Conference which met from November 5th to November 11th, appears to have been the official adherence of the Bulgarian delegation to the Balkan Union project, already approved by the delegations of the other five Balkan states at the conference in Bucharest. Although this adherence was made subject to the reservations relative to the protection of the minorities and the assurance of equal rights to all Balkan countries expounded by the Bulgarian delegation at Istanbul as well as at Bucharest, it enabled the conference officially to request of the governments concerned the conclusion of a multilateral pact along the lines of the draft-project approved and adopted at Bucharest.

Simultaneously the Conference emphatically reiterated its previous suggestion relative to the

desirability

desirability of a regular annual meeting of Balkan statesmen; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs in particular. Following a proposal by Hasan Bey the conference decided to request the Greek Government to intervene with the other Balkan governments for the materialization of this suggestion.

In the economic domain the principal result obtained - to which great significance is attached - constitutes the adoption of a project elaborated by the Economic Committee relating to a Balkan understanding in customs and economic matters. The outstanding points of this project apparently provide for the application of preferential tariffs between Balkan states and the adoption of a joint trade policy - based on common agreement - in regard to foreign countries. Simultaneously the conference decided on the establishment of a Trade Compensation Chamber, to deal with the exchange of commodities between the Balkan countries.

In addition to the foregoing the Fourth Balkan Conference is reported to have suggested the construction of a railway line and a direct road between Sidirocastro and Dopnidja, the establishment of direct railway communication between Greece, Bulgaria, and Rumania by the construction of a bridge over the Danube between Bulgaria and Rumania, and the construction of a road between Posthumia, Subotica, Belgrade, and Athens.

Likewise it is said to have adopted an agreement for the uniform regulation of air traffic, the statutes of the maritime section of the Inter-Balkan Chamber of Commerce respecting maritime communication,

and

and measures of a nature to facilitate tourism among Balkan countries.

Furthermore the Conference is reported to ha ve approved a project for the establishment of a Balkan Labor Bureau which is to work in conjunction with international labor organizations, and to have adopted the proposals made for the improvement of the conditions of working women by ensuring them equality as regards salary and advancement possibilities in all professions and trades.

Reports indicate at the same time that the committee charged wi th the examination of the unification of the laws of Balkan countries approved a project for an extradition convention to be concluded between the Balkan governments and decided on the unification of laws and regulations applied in regard to checks and policies.

Before adjourning,the Balkan Conference apparently expressed the opinion that the parliamentary element in the different national delegations should in the future be greater than heretofore and for this purpose decided on the modification of its statutes. A committee to be instituted by the Council of the Balkan Conference will be charged wi th this task. The same committee will examine a project offered by the Yugoslav delegation which, to all appearances, seems to be in flagrant contrast with the above decision of the Conference, since it aims at making of the

Balkan

Balkan Conference a purely private annual gathering of the different Associations of a Balkan Union the establishment of which it proposes in every Balkan country. In fact, this proposal appears to have called forth considerable surprise and ill-feeling in Balkan Conference circles as it was interpreted as an attempt to reduce the importance of this gathering which at the present, as emphatically pointed out by the Turkish and Greek delegates, reveals a semi-official character and which in their opinion must by all means be strengthened.

From the reports available one can easily infer a close Turco-Greek cooperation in practically all matters of importance touched upon at Salonika. As a matter of fact, several private conversations between the heads of the Turkish and Greek delegations are said to have taken place before the actual opening of the Balkan Conference which was preceded by the unveiling of a memorial inscription affixed on the house in Salonika in which the Gazi was born, a ceremony which constituted a renewed occasion for a cordial celebration and manifestation of the friendly ties existing between Turkey and Greece.

On his return from Greece Hasan Bey made a disappointing short statement to the local press in which he gave expression to the hope that the Balkan governments would seriously examine among themselves the proposals and suggestions made by the Conference, since this would be the only encouragement and guarantee

antee for future fruitful work. Likewise, in his opening address M. Papanastasiou, the President of the Fourth Balkan Conference, made some critical references to the neglect manifested by the governments involved in the matter of putting into effect and applying the proposals of the conference.

As regards the comments of the Turkish press, they were as pointed out above remarkably few and held to general lines. Nevertheless it is interesting that most editorials consider and appreciate the Balkan Union chiefly as a defensive measure against the outside. For example, referring to the political questions standing in the way of the conclusion of an understanding among the Balkan countries, Yunus Nadi Bey states in the CUMHURIYET:

> The necessity of jointly defending common interests against the outside world can easily facilitate the solution of many questions. ... Considered from this angle the problem of minorities as well as the question of frontier rectification lose all importance and weight. ...

Commenting on the possibilities and advantages of a Balkan customs union the VAKIT states:

> The Balkan countries have for ages been the victim of foreign exploitation. ... Individually they are helpless. ... All measures are futile. Consequently the principal problem is not the question of minorities but the matter of taking joint action and measures. ... For instance, a customs union will safeguard their vital interests and at the same time ensure their economic development. After creating among themselves markets for their products, the Balkan countries can proceed to a vast division of labor as far as industry is concerned. Thus the Balkans will become a complete economic unit. ...

In

In another article deputy Yunus Nadi Bey states in his CUMHURIYET:

> We have to admit that the recent Balkan Conference which met in Salonika constitutes an important step forward towards the desired understanding in the Balkans.

Respectfully yours,

Robert P. Skinner,
American Ambassador.

Copy sent to Amconsulate General, Beirut.
" " " Amlegation, Athens.

RPS/lr

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DOCUMENT FILE

NOTE

SEE 868.00 General conditions/35 FOR #81

FROM Greece (MacVeagh) DATED Dec.13, 1933

TO NAME

I—1127 GPO

REGARDING:

Fourth Balkan Conference held at Salonika.

Comments on work of -.

770 SALONIKA, 1933/15

Wi

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BUREAU OF INDEXES AND ARCHIVES

A provisional compensation or barter agreement, signed at Athens on November 9 by the Hellenic Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Minister to Greece, went into effect on November 13.

General Kondylis, the Hellenic Minister of War, on November 11 visited Pirot when he unveiled a monument to the Greek soldiers who fell in Yugoslavia during the World War.

The Fourth Balkan Conference was held in Saloniki from November 5 to November 11. It renewed, with reservations by the Bulgarian delegation, the resolution of the Third Conference in favor of a multilateral Balkan Pact. It adopted a draft project for a Regional Economic Agreement of the Balkan States, a draft project for the establishment of a Cooperative Office, a draft project for the creation of a Balkan Labor Office, a number of recommendations regarding aerial services, the completion or improvement of various roads, the extension and coordination of railways, the development of the tourist trade, improvement of the working conditions for female labor, and the encouragement of intellectual rapprochement between the participating countries.

770 Salonika, 1933

GPO

Central File: Decimal File 770.00, Political Relations Of States, Relations; Bi-Lateral Treaties., Balkan States And The World, March 20, 1933 - Dec. 13, 1933. March 20, 1933 - December 13, 1933. MS Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States: Records of the U.S. Department of State, 1930-1944: Records of the Department of State Relating to Political Relations of Turkey, Greece, and the Balkan States, 1930-1939. National Archives (United States). Archives Unbound, link.gale.com%2Fapps%2Fdoc%2FSC5111392251%2FGDSC%3Fu%3Domni%26sid%3Dbookmark-GDSC. Accessed 20 June 2025.